

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Hamzy: Federal Grants to Make College More Affordable Available to Qualified Applicants



Bristol, Plymouth Students Eligible for Pell Grants Should Apply

Students who qualify for federal Pell Grants should apply for new higher education grants worth between \$750 and \$4,000 that will help make college more affordable, state Representative William A. Hamzy, R-78th District, said today.

The new Academic Competitiveness (AC) grants and the National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) grants provide \$790 million in funding this fall and \$4.5 billion over the next five years.

“These grants can make the difference for high school students who have considered applying to the University of Connecticut, any of the schools in our state university system or to a community-technical college but have had second thoughts because of the costs. Now more than ever, higher education is an essential prerequisite for the challenging and high-paying jobs that are opening up throughout our state. These new grants can make a college education affordable to hundreds of young people in our towns. I strongly recommend that qualified students in Bristol and Plymouth take advantage of them,” Representative Hamzy said.

“Many Connecticut employers are looking for college graduates with degrees in science, technology, engineering, math and critical foreign languages but are having difficulty recruiting them,” Representative Hamzy said. “The General Assembly has approved several initiatives over the past few years to help our state attract new employers and encourage Connecticut companies to remain here and expand - but we also need a state workforce that has those skills in abundance. These grants will encourage students to take more challenging courses in high school and major in areas that are in high demand by employers.”

Students can receive more eligibility and application information for both of the grant programs online at www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov or by calling 1- 800- 4FEDAID (or 1- 800-433-3243).

The Department of Education estimates that approximately 500,000 students will qualify for the grants.

The AC grants provide college students who completed a rigorous course of study in high school with additional funds of up to \$750 during their freshman year and up to \$1,300

during their sophomore year. The assistance is in addition to Pell Grant funds students are already receiving. College juniors and seniors who are eligible for SMART grants automatically will receive up to \$4,000 in additional aid next year.

To receive an AC Grant, college freshmen and sophomores must be Pell Grant-eligible and have completed a program of rigorous high school course work as defined by their state and recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. To receive a SMART Grant, third- and fourth-year Pell Grant-eligible students must meet the requirements, major in designated science, technology, math or critical foreign languages and maintain a 3.0 GPA.

A fact sheet on AC and SMART Grants is available online at:

<http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0606ACSMART.PDF>